



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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Defendants Sentenced for Internet-Based Wire Fraud and Aggravated Identity Theft

(Richmond, Virginia) – Devin Keith Weller, age 22, and Christopher Robert Bacco, age 24, both of Baltimore, Maryland, were sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge James R. Spencer to 55 months and 53 months in prison, respectively, following their guilty pleas to wire fraud, possession of device-making equipment, and aggravated identity theft. Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Charles J. Cunningham, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Field Office and Guy Cottrell, Inspector in Charge, United States Postal Inspection Service, Washington Field Office, announced the sentence.

Bacco and Weller were engaged in a sophisticated Internet-based scheme to exploit stolen credit cards. The two men worked with other individuals through a now-defunct criminal website known as www.iaaca.com, which stood for the “International Association for the Advancement of Criminal Activity.” Through this website, Bacco and Weller met a European-based vendor of stolen account numbers, and purchased from him 150 such stolen numbers in electronic form. They downloaded these account numbers to a laptop computer, which they used in conjunction with an encoding device to encode the stolen account numbers to plastic credit cards. Bacco and Weller specially ordered these credit cards from another Internet criminal and had them embossed with names matching fake identification cards that the two men had obtained from yet a third Internet-based criminal vendor.

On June 13, 2005, with the above-described tools in hand, Bacco and Weller traveled south from Baltimore, Maryland, down the I-95 corridor, and made frequent stops at multiple Target stores in Northern and Central Virginia. The defendants used the fraudulent credit cards and false identification documents to purchase Apple iPods and electronic gaming devices, which they intended to auction-off over the Internet using eBay. As part of the auction fraud component of their scheme, the defendants intended to use the eBay seller ID of a victim from Massachusetts, whose eBay seller ID and password (apparently compromised via “phishing”) had been purchased by the defendants from still another criminal source over the Internet.

On the morning of June 27, 2005, while on the road in Virginia, Weller sent an email to a prospective eBay buyer, offering for sale numerous pieces of fraudulently obtained electronic equipment, and indicating that he intended to have three-four times this amount of equipment in the following days.

On June 27, 2005, the defendants made several more purchases of electronic equipment at various Target Stores. The two were finally apprehended by Henrico County Police at a Target Store in Glen Allen, Virginia. At the time of the arrests, Henrico police seized thousands of dollars worth of electronic equipment that had been fraudulently purchased from assorted Target stores, all of which was returned to the store chain. Police also seized the defendants' laptop computer and encoding device. Both men were originally charged by the Henrico County Commonwealth Attorney's Office. However, when the international and multi-jurisdictional nature of the case became known, local and federal authorities agreed to transfer the case to federal authorities for prosecution.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Henrico County Police Department investigated this case. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Brian R. Hood.

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